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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FEDERAL WIRETAP INVESTIGATION SHUTS DOWN FRESNO-BASED COCAINE
TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION, 19 INDICTED, NEARLY \$1 MILLION SEIZED**

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that MARIA MONSAVAIS, 35, of Fresno, and ELIZABETH GUERRERO, 29, of Fresno, are the last two defendants indicted, yesterday, in connection with a major cocaine distribution operation based in Fresno, California. (A list of all defendants and charges is attached.)

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Major Narcotics Unit of the Fresno Police Department .

According to court documents, the charges against MONSAVAIS and GUERRERO stem from a 15-month OCDETF investigation of the Ramiro Barragan cocaine trafficking organization. OCDETF is an acronym for the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program, which was established in 1982 to combine and leverage federal law enforcement assets into a comprehensive attack against significant drug trafficking organizations. The investigation, which included the use of federally authorized wiretaps, culminated in four separate indictments charging 19 co-conspirators, including Ramiro Barragan, with offenses ranging from cocaine distribution to bank fraud. The IRS and drug agents have also seized approximately 11 kilograms (24 pounds) of cocaine, and nearly \$1 million in cash and assets, consisting of a residence in Fresno, five luxury vehicles, and over \$240,000 in cash which represented drug proceeds.

United States Attorney Scott stated: "Federal and local law enforcement agencies are to be commended for their extraordinary work in targeting this major drug trafficking organization."

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, the next district court appearance in this matter is scheduled before United States District Judge Anthony Ishii on Monday, February 13.

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Indictment I

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>City of Residence</u>	
Ramiro Barragan	48	Fresno	*
Ignacio Calderon	54	Fresno	*
Zebedee White	36	Fresno	*
Jason Lee	38	Reno, Nevada	*
Edgar Barragan	21	Fresno	*
Humberto Llerena, aka "El Cuba"	49	Sacramento	*
Maria Alejandrina Orci-Romero	39	Sacramento	*
Francisco Torres, aka "El Topo"	28	Fresno	
Jorge Islas	37	Fresno	
Seila Melgoza	26	Fresno	
Elizabeth Guerrero	29	Fresno	**

All defendants are charged with conspiring to distribute and to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine, which carries a mandatory minimum prison term of ten years and a maximum term of life, along with a fine of up to \$4 million, and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, which carries a mandatory minimum prison term of five years and a maximum term of 40 years, along with a fine of up to \$2 million.

*Indicates defendants who are also charged with possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute near an elementary school, which carries a maximum prison term of 80 years and possibly a fine of \$4 million.

**Indicates defendant who is a fugitive.

Indictment II

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>City of Residence</u>
Edgar Barragan	21	Fresno
Edgar Avendano	27	Fresno
Jesus Oscar Herrera	25	Fresno

All defendants are charged with conspiring to distribute and to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, which carries a mandatory minimum prison term of 10 years and a maximum term of life, along with a fine of up to \$4 million. All defendants are also charged with possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, which carries a mandatory consecutive prison term of five years.

Indictment III

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>City of Residence</u>	
Enaida Carolina Haro	27	Fresno	*
Ramiro Barragan	48	Fresno	
Santos Rafael Islas Ramirez aka Rafael Ramirez Santos	39	Tijuana, Mexico	
Edgar Barragan	21	Fresno	
Maria Monsavaiz	35	Fresno	

All defendants are charged with conspiring to commit bank fraud and money laundering which carries a maximum prison term of five years and possibly a \$250,000 fine, and bank fraud which carries a maximum prison term of 30 years and possibly a fine of \$1,000,000.

*Indicates defendant who is a fugitive.

Indictment IV

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>City of Residence</u>
Yolanda Campos	28	Fresno
Marisa Rodriguez	29	Fresno

Both defendants are charged with conspiring to launder money which carries a maximum prison term of five years and possibly a \$250,000 fine, money laundering which carries a maximum prison term of 20 years and possibly a fine of \$500,000, bank fraud which carries a maximum prison term of 30 years and possibly a fine of \$1,000,000, and false statements which carries a maximum prison term of 5 years and possibly a fine of \$250,000.